

Friends of Queen's Wood AGM 14th July 2021 via Zoom at 7.30pm

Present: 23 members

1. Introduction Zoom instructions.
2. Apologies Alison Watson, Catherine Best, Denis Bury
3. Minutes of AGM 2020 Agreed
4. Chair's report. John Dorken explained that the Natural Flood Management Scheme (NFM) was revealed to us by the Highways Department in October 2020 and was supposed to be implemented by March 2021 at the latest. Since then FQW have spent much time examining the scheme and asking for modifications and clarifications. We had lodged strong objections to the scheme in the Council's consultations, as had many members.

We hope to fully resume activities which had been curtailed during Lockdown such as Work groups, guided walks, talks and possibly a Family Fun Day. The committee desperately needs new blood - especially those with particular skills such as publicity, ecological or botanical knowledge, and to lead work groups.

In discussion, members suggested that difficulties in recruiting active younger members were common in many organisations, but that there were still people who had the commitment to be involved if they were engaged through social media. Many younger members do not read emails. Laura Dekker had done invaluable work launching FQW on Face Book but we need to investigate the use of WhatsApp.

5. Treasurers Report Michael Johns said that income from members had held up well in the pandemic; we had not applied for grants and our expenditure was much reduced because we had not launched any projects or activities. Our reserves were now significant which would enable us to spend money challenging the flood scheme if required or to start new projects as the lockdown eased.
6. Election of committee Janet Shapiro was thanked for her excellent work on Publicity for the past few years. Sadly Janet has to resign from this duty. Sarah Graham Brown and Jane Warren were re-elected and Laura Dekker was elected to a full committee member having been previously co-opted.
7. Election of Chair John Dorken was re-elected
8. Natural Flood Management scheme. The rest of the meeting was devoted to discussion of the NFM scheme particularly having regard to the flooding in

Wood Vale two days previously and the damaging passage of water through the wood.

John Dorken reported that we still did not have the full report on the Public Consultation process carried out in March and it appeared that no decision to go ahead with the work had yet been taken. FQW had a meeting on site with Cllr Hakata two weeks ago which seemed to show some hope that the scheme might be re-examined. Some FQW members had also been shown the work in Trent Park on flood management using similar structures to those proposed for QW. That site had been very different from Queen's Wood and did not offer reassurance on the appropriateness of the scheme in our context. A site visit with the council drain engineers and their consultants is due to take place shortly. A firm of solicitors had written on our behalf to the council probing whether the council had done an adequate Environmental Impact Assessment.

John said that FQW were stressing the need for the council to go back to basics and rethink the scheme from scratch, having regard to the evidence of where the water had flowed in the latest incident. FQW were not against a flood scheme in principle but were firmly opposed to the existing one. Compromises might need to be made but they needed to look at the rationale for the scheme and consider alternative solutions.

Residents from Wood Vale reported that a number of homes had been flooded (including sewage) and that gullies and drains in the road and in Wood Lane were not kept clear. The grille near the wall in the wood was blocked and overflowed and the water, rushing down paths within the wood, ran round the flood prevention wall and came like a torrent down the path into Wood Vale and then continued down the path towards Park Rd.

Louise Lewis suggested that we should look at the Haringey Strategic Flood Review which showed the flood danger from the whole of the catchment area including Highgate wood and Highgate Village which led to continual flooding problems in Muswell Hill Rd over many years. The flooding in Park Rd was also due to excess water running from roads such as Onslow, Connaught, Cranley and Woodland Gardens. Several members stressed the need to look at the whole area, of which Queen's Wood was only a small part. Mike Hacker said that the contribution of Queen's Wood to the overall flooding was minimal and that opening the storm drain in Muswell Hill Road into Queen's Wood and seeking to retain the water there would be foolhardy.

Louise also emphasised Thames Water's responsibility in all this, with it being their responsibility to keep drains and culverts in the wood cleared regularly and that they should be funding a full investigation into the flooding as well as Haringey council. There had been several previous floods in Wood Vale which had been due to blocked drains along the road. David

Warren said that the sewage pipes were separate from flood drains and leaks involving sewage must have a different cause. Glenys Law agreed that the first priority was for Thames Water to maintain drains and gullies properly. John Dorken said there was a passing reference to Thames Water contributing to the work in the council's Frequently Asked Questions; he would be pressing the council to clarify this.

Bruce Boyd suggested that the scheme would turn much of Queen's Wood into a lake without providing much assistance to Wood Vale. Leaky dams were good for large river catchment areas but would do little to stop a flash flood in the small streams in the wood.

Deborah Purlin asked whether FQW could pay for specialist advice; John Dorken said this would be expensive but we would look at the possibility.

John Dorken summed up the discussion by thanking members for their very helpful and constructive comments. If a scheme was to go ahead, it was vital that it should be effective at stopping the sort of flooding which had occurred and this could only be done by looking at the wider area as a whole. He promised to keep members in touch with developments.